

of defining the scene in which the political or intellectual factors must work. Indeed, it will serve an indispensable purpose for the historian, if its only result is to force him into a critical reconsideration of what he means when he talks about "public opinion."

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POWDERMAKER, HORTENSE

Hollywood: The Dream Factory.

Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950. 342 pp. \$3.50.

Dr. Powdermaker's *Hollywood* is a report of a year's field work in that city (July 1946-August 1947), during which time she did approximately 900 interviews with people in the various branches of film making (sometimes several interviews with one informant), examined the files of the Motion Picture Association, of the Screen Writers', Actors' and other Guilds, and the trade journals. Her account is mainly organized around the activities of the executives, producers, writers, directors, and actors, and their interrelations in film production.

According to Dr. Powdermaker, a major struggle is being waged between two factions in the making of films: on the one hand, the executives and producers and those in lower positions who are infected with their outlook, and, on the other hand, the writers, directors and actors who have some gifts for storytelling and some skill in and devotion to their art. The executives and producers are pictured as mainly men who are concerned with dominating those around them, who force on writers, directors, and film editors their

crude and mistaken ideas and insist on having their way because they are in power, who justify their decisions on the grounds that they know what the public wants, but who in this are only projecting their own uncouth tastes on the audience. These executives and producers are obsessed with maintaining their success, which is never securely established (you are only as good as your last picture), and since they have no mastery of their medium, are full of ideas of luck, permeated with the gambler's mentality, and conduct their business in a perpetual atmosphere of crisis (crisis is the backbone of our industry). Against these obstructive but powerful personages the true artists struggle. Occasionally a gifted writer or director has sufficient success so that he can obtain control of the story he works on and prevent it from being mutilated. More often these artists are subject to the whims of the executives and producers, who cut out essential parts of the story, substitute their own ideas and turn out something unrecognizable and painful to the artist.

Human relations in Hollywood are described as a caricature of the worst social relations prevailing in other parts of our culture. The force of prestige and dominance, which is correlated almost perfectly with salary, is exerted in the crudest fashion. The relation between producer and writer is particularly elaborated in strongly sado-masochistic terms. The producer wants the writer to be a "wife" or a "lead-pencil." The writer regards himself as a kept woman of the producer, who prostitutes himself and gets nothing but a fortune in return. The writer struggles in the toils, suffers, and gives in, while the story is hashed to bits by the uncomprehending

but dominant producer. All relationships are fragile and underscored with intense hostility. On the surface this is crudely disguised by everyone's calling each other sweetheart and giving costly presents. A person may be invited everywhere, abruptly snubbed by everyone, then invited again depending on the dropping or signing of a contract. All relationships are regarded as instrumental; gossip columns are scanned for indications of new contracts; starlets are futilely sleeping with assistant directors in the hope of advancement when the relation is so devoid of sentiment that they will hardly be remembered afterwards.

Just five years before Dr. Powdermaker went to Hollywood, another book by a social scientist was published, also titled *Hollywood*, written by Dr. Leo Rosten, based on a more extensive study and longer sojourn there, covering the same topics, making many of the same points. Dr. Powdermaker makes no mention of this study. The disregard for the work of a previous researcher seems not only to be a failure in collaboration, but also to have led to a wasteful reduplication of work.

Dr. Rosten's *Hollywood* already contained an analysis of the functions of executives, producers, directors, and actors, in considerably more detail, and a more systematic account of career lines and salary statistics of members of these occupations. It recorded similar complaints of directors and writers against producers; it detailed in a similar way the plural writing and continual alteration of scripts. It remarked similarly on the preoccupation with luck, the breaks, and gambling; the poor quality of human relations, cloaked by present-giving and sweetheart-calling; the incessancy

of activity related to the impossibility of establishing success with any finality.

Dr. Powdermaker and Dr. Rosten differ on the following points. Dr. Powdermaker believes that if the "creative" people are allowed to do things their way, unhampered by the stupidities of the producers, they usually achieve not only critical but box office successes. Dr. Rosten is more inclined to suppose a divergence between what satisfies the artist and what satisfies the public. No systematic study has to our knowledge been made as to the relation between critical and box office successes. Such a study would be necessary to resolve this question. As related to this point, Dr. Powdermaker believes that the producers project their tastes onto the public; Dr. Rosten thinks that the producers more often have a true insight into popular preferences, partly because they are of the crowd, partly because they have a real flair for showmanship. Dr. Powdermaker associates the disorganized, unplanned, crisis-ridden method of production with the producers who have neither talent nor skill, while the artists, possessing disciplined skills, can if they are permitted conduct the work in a more orderly and economical fashion. According to Dr. Rosten unbusinesslike procedure is inseparable from the working of artistic personalities. Further observation would seem to be required to determine who is being undisciplined and whether it is indispensable or not.

One may note the operation of the personal equation in the observations of these two researchers. Dr. Powdermaker is, for instance, impressed with the sinister quality of the producer's dominance of the writer. Dr. Rosten seems to find this relation much less alarming, and is more inclined to take

it humorously. Is Dr. Powdermaker taking too literally or one-sidedly the self-dramatizations of some of her informants? Or is Dr. Rosten employing the defenses of humor to minimize the morbid aspects of certain relationships? Presumably such questions cannot be decided by the printed reports and we are thrown back on our impressions of the personalities of the reporters.

Dr. Powdermaker remarks that she is interested in the way the movies are made for the light it throws on the movies themselves. At the end she makes a few connections between her observations of the movie makers and movie content. To take only one instance, she cites a film comedy in which a concert pianist is converted to jazz; this illustrates Hollywood's contempt for the artist. Dr. Powdermaker overlooks numerous other films, dealing with the lives of Zola, Chopin, and Gauguin, among others, in which Hollywood subscribes to the prevailing artist legend of western culture. Here again further study is necessary to determine the interrelations between the methods of film-making and movie content.

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OGLE, MARBURY BLADEN, JR.

Public Opinion and Political Dynamics. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950. v, 362 pp. \$3.50.

No more timely or necessary book has been written than this "analysis of the nature of public opinion and its role in democratic and other societies" by Prof. Ogle of the Purdue University Political Science Department.

Formerly at Western Reserve University, the author was also associated with the U.S. Office of Strategic Services during World War II. Academically and from grimly realistic personal experience his work is marked by high scholarship, practical soundness, and readability—factors indicated for a useful textbook.

In the first nine of his volume's 16 chapters Dr. Ogle analyzes democracy, public opinion, rational thinking, language, myths, communism, fascism, political and social behaviors. In the last seven he discusses, more concretely, the family, church and school as social institutions; propaganda; opinion measurement; the press; the radio; and the motion picture industry.

No shallow compilation of factual data, the book stresses basic concepts and reasons why attitudes and opinions move from the private into the public realm. It is concerned with public opinion on the practical political level—where organized groups of individual minds affect social organization, patterns of action and thought trends.

In no narrow ivory-tower is Prof. Ogle. His volume—written for a college text—draws upon anthropology, sociology, psychology, government, semantics, and world history for its interpretations. For those who, in this slowly-awakening mid-century, may not know the facts, he presents clear analyses of the ideological concepts: Democracy, Fascism, and Communism. And he warns of the dangers inherent in the latter's revolutionary conspiracy.

Aside from its obvious values for basic instruction in the abstractions of public opinion, the myth and the body politic, it may well be that this book will become widely used in other ways, too. For example, the chapters on propa-